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JFK

8 March 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting of President's Committee on Stockpiling,
27 February 1962

1. Mr. McDermott called the Committee's attention to a 1953 stockpiling report prepared by Princeton University entitled "The Stockpiling of Strategic and Critical Materials -- 1946-1952 (?)". The press became aware of the existence of this report and wanted access to it. Mr. Salinger ruled that it would not be released now but perhaps later.

2. The discussion then turned to the question of declassifying present stockpile objectives. Except for Commerce, all the agency representatives present either favored or would not object to such declassification. The Commerce representative was worried about the effect that knowledge of large stockpile surpluses would have on American business and wanted to hear better positive reasons for declassifying. Mr. McDermott pointed out the President's wish as a strong positive factor with the burden of proof, so to speak, on those who wish to retain a security classification. The Interior representative did not believe that the public release of present objectives would harm business and indeed might help it. Any adverse effects could be taken care of by reassuring them that a disposal program would be carried out with their problems in mind. In any case, industry knew pretty well now what we actually have in stockpile.

3. Mr. McDermott pointed out that the present stockpile objectives are "quite antique" and that what we decided to do for these would not be considered a precedent for the public release of the more realistic objectives still to be developed. He said that he would report approval of declassification of present objectives to the President except for the Commerce objection based on grounds other than national security. He did point out that there might be implications for business. Mr. McDermott stated that he would coordinate his memo to the President before sending it (this was subsequently done). I cleared the draft with the DD/I.

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4. A preliminary report based on contributions from several agencies would go to the study group by Friday, March 2 and would reflect differences in views among Agencies. The study group would convene on March 5 to discuss and revise the draft and present it to the parent committee on March 7. The parent committee would meet on March 8 or March 9. The Principals themselves would meet on March 13 at 2:00 p.m. to review the work of their designees on the parent committee. This would allow six days to prepare a final report, circulate it for coordination and submit it to the President.



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